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CRITICAL REFLECTIONS OF TEACHING A LEADERSHIP COURSE

by

JAMES R. PALLETT

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring, 1996.

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April 17/96

Date

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore, through critical reflection, the impact of teaching leadership to junior high students on teachers' personal and professional growth. The study was a naturalistic interpretive study based upon semi-structured interviews with four teachers. Two male and two female teachers at various stages of their careers volunteered to participate in the study. This provided a valuable perspective in providing a range of insights which differed greatly.

The method of data collection and the analysis technique was guided by the belief that human behaviour is context dependent and that research is a sense-making or interpretive activity. The research revealed that there were four growth outcomes experienced by the participants: a better understanding of self, an expanded conceptual understanding of teaching, improved proficiency in teaching skills, and leadership insights.

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Chapter One

Introduction

We learn: 10% of what we read,
20% of what we hear,
30% of what we see,
50% of what we see and hear
and
70% of what is discussed with others,
80% of what is experienced personally,
90% of what we teach someone else.

Gary Phillips (1984, p. 84)

"Successful teachers are thoughtful teachers" wrote Carl Glickman (1986, p.99) and thus he argued that helping teachers develop their ability to think about what they do is vital to their personal and professional growth. Studies have shown (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Elliot, 1991; Galbraith, 1991; Ripley, 1991; Russell, 1994; Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall, 1983) that growth can be encouraged in adults when they assume and reflect on complex helping roles. In the case of educators, one of the most complex helping roles they may assume is that of the leadership teacher. Earl Reum (1991, p. 3) outlines its' complexity:

> Leadership teachers have one of the greatest responsibilities in the school. They are in the

> position to do unlimited good or irreparable harm. Their attitudes influence the leaders of the school and eventually the entire student body. They have at their disposal the best instructional aid for teaching democratic principles, yet, if they misuse it, students turn away from the very system the advisor pretends to expound. Students are sensitive to the discrepancy between preaching and practicing. The student leadership teacher is a person in a unique role. Personal feelings, attitudes, and prejudices are constantly on display before a very critical audience.
>
> The teacher must be alert to the influence affecting the student body, the student heart, and the student mind. The job of the teacher is to teach by example, to lead with wisdom, and to inspire with enthusiasm.

In his poem called "We Learn", Gary Phillips alludes to the power of learning from teaching. Through the process of learning the material, reviewing it, preparing to teach it and finally presenting it, the teacher can experience significant cognitive advancements. He points out that through this process one may reperceive the material in new ways, perhaps synthesizing it into new formulations, which in turn enrich one's knowledge of that material and other knowledge as well (p. 12). In a study examining teaching associated with leadership classes, Conrad and Hedin (1991) reported that the participants felt they had 'learned more'

and 'gained more' from teaching the leadership class than from any other educational experience. In analyzing the data they concluded that the 'more' that was attested to, was not so much a reference to the 'amount', but to the 'significance'. From the experience the leaders felt they had obtained more insight, wisdom and knowledge about teaching than ever before and had integrated it at a higher level. In an attempt to expose the understandings or "wisdoms" that grow from teaching others, the personal reflections of four junior high teachers who taught leadership programs are presented in this study.

Statement of the Question

The specific research question that was investigated in this study was, "What kinds of professional growth outcomes might teachers experience from teaching leadership to Junior High Students?"

Delimitations

The study was delimited to:

a. Junior High School Teachers who taught leadership to youth via a leadership option class, a leadership club or through a student council.

Limitations

The study was limited as follows:

a. the number of participants was limited to four.

b. the degree to which the researcher was able to record and understand all that goes on in interviews.

c. the participants' ability to recall relevant experiences or practices that may have contributed to their personal and professional growth.

Assumptions

In conducting this study it was assumed that:

a. Teaching youth about leadership, will result in personal and professional growth.

b. Good leadership and good teaching are guided by the same knowledge, skills and attitudes.

c. By contributing to or formulating their own questions and by collecting their own data to answer them, teachers will develop new understandings that will contribute to their professional growth.

d. The personal judgment of teachers is the best source of direction for their individual growth goals.

e. A qualitative research methodology is the appropriate mode of research in conducting this study.

Definition of Terms

Personal Growth: any transformational change in the way we see ourselves as unique individuals.

Professional Growth: any transformational change in the way we see ourselves as qualified educators.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because it expanded the understanding and theoretical foundation of how teachers learn and develop. Theories about teacher learning and development have only been emerging within the last two decades and therefore, are still in the formative stages. An awareness of various professional development strategies and their effectiveness at promoting learning can have an enormous impact on the continued evolution of a teacher's classroom practice.

Chapter Two

Background Information

> **By their very nature, education and the practices of teaching are concerned with human growth. We teach so that others may learn, may develop, may grow; and in doing so we find that as teachers we too have the opportunity to share in this possibility of growth.**
>
> **Dale Ripley (1991, p. 1)**

To assist the reader in placing this study in context, pertinent information relative to teacher growth as it applies in this study will be provided. The chapter will begin with an examination of leadership and growth, followed by information on learning from reflection, generally accepted models and theories of growth, and will conclude with growth theories specific to teacher development.

Leadership and Growth

Although there are literally thousands of studies which have addressed personal and professional growth associated with participating in leadership programs, there are very few which have

focused on the growth outcomes from teaching such programs. Examining Bass' (1981) review of over five thousand abstracts pertaining to leadership development, it was noted that he makes no mention of any studies which have examined growth outcomes occurring from teaching leadership. He does however, make note of some studies that had reported instructors experiencing growth as a result of assuming teaching roles. For example, House (1965) reported that over half of his instructors stated that their knowledge of managerial skills was clarified and amplified as a result of facilitating leadership "buzz groups." Hart (1975) reported that trainers who helped women focus on life style, interpersonal skills and leadership theory, reported having increased confidence and self esteem, while R. D. Miller (1979) indicated that trainers reported a greater understanding of the leadership role in the democratic process from teaching citizenship to high school students.

Learning From Reflection

In research examining leadership studies associated with being a mentor and peer teacher, various writers (Myrick & Erney, 1985; Chauvin, 1988; Huling-Austin,1990; Maynard & Furlong, 1993; Wilkin, 1993) have reported that tutors and mentors attribute much of their

personal and professional growth to being prompted to think about and articulate the knowledge which is associated with their teaching. Russell (1994) examined learning from reflection on the art of teaching. He suggested that compared to the more familiar "learning from experienced teachers" and "learning from professors", "learning from teaching" is a relatively underdeveloped method of improving teaching competence. Justification for such an approach however, can be found as early as the 1930's in John Dewey's work. In Experience and Education (1977), Dewey stressed that the creation of new knowledge or the transformation of oneself through learning to perform new roles was more fundamental than simply learning how to do something. For him, "learning from teaching" meant a circle of 'trying' and 'undergoing' by becoming aware of a problem, getting an idea, trying out a response, experiencing the consequences and either confirming or modifying previous conceptions. It was his belief that this process had the potential to result in significant personal and professional growth.

Using a similar process, others have investigated personal and professional growth of adults using what was known as "critical incidents" or "marker events" (Levinson, 1978; Measor, 1985;

Sheehy, 1989). Both of these labels refer to an experience that is so "transforming" for an individual, that one becomes, in some significant way, a different person. Expanding on these ideas, Russell and Johnston (1991) used the notion of reflection-in-action to describe the active process of reframing experiences to test one's actions. Russell stresses that the development of practical knowledge from experience occurs only when one has "a perspective that recognizes the possibility and the importance of being attentive to experience and the opportunities to learn from it" (p. 4). In slightly different terms, Rubin (1989) describes how good teachers frequently rely on intuitive knowledge which stems from insight gleaned through past classroom encounters which repeatedly have been processed and internalized through reflection about teaching and learning. This process of "reaching back into experience" in an active way, is also used by Britzman (1992) to distinguish between mere circumstances and lived experience. According to Britzman the distinction comes in:

> ...our capacity to bestow experience with meanings, be reflective, and take action. Without an awareness of potential and given meanings, and our own capacity to expand experience through interpretation and risk, with this active side, our capacity to participate in the shaping of experience is limited (p. 254).

Donaldson (1992) suggests that the tie between teaching and

reflective learning is most obvious in teaching situations in which content comes into play. Acknowledging that it is the learning obtained through and from teaching and not the act of teaching itself that contributes mostly to teacher growth. Bolman and Deal (1994) suggest that teaching leadership is a practical way of developing as a professional.

> Once teachers "try on" leadership, they find that it fits them like a glove. They come to view themselves as serious theoreticians as well as capable practitioners, as contributors to a collaborative process as well as individuals in classrooms, and as major decision makers in the educational process as well as implementors of programs. They come to value themselves and ...each other; and in so doing, they transform the professional culture in which they work (p.172).

The learning Bolman and Deal refer to is what Mezirow (1991) calls "transsituational learning", or learning that results in a change in the teachers' ability to interpret a situation, either through enhancement of their previous perspective or through their transformation. Thus, learning from leadership contributes to a type of knowing about teaching that transcends the knowledge normally required to teach.

Merriam (1984) suggest that there is an intrinsic connection between this type of development and growth in adulthood. She

suggests that "it is not the events in and of themselves but the learning that we derive from these events that shape our lives" (p. 29). Gould (1978), Daloz (1986) and Robertson (1988) support this intrinsic connection suggesting that the learning derived from reflection has more to do with the "transformation" of the experience than the accumulation of knowledge. When the "transformation" results in the expansion of a sense of self, by precipitating a change in basic assumptions, values or skills, Robertson suggests that growth has occurred.

Models and Theories of Growth

To help explain the process of growth, a number of theories have been developed. One of the most recent theories is offered by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa (1990). They believe that somewhere between the ages of 20 and 30, individuals attain a configuration of individual traits which form the basis of consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions relative to adult growth. The more of a particular trait an individual has, the more likely he or she will show the behaviors associated with it. However, they do acknowledge that the traits are not the sole determinants of behavior and that they may be modified by social role expectations, the immediate context, mood, and acquired habits.

One of the strongest traditions in describing the process of development and growth is the Stage Theory. Proponents of this theory maintain that at about the same time in our lives, we all experience similar events, problems or challenges. The modern version of the stage theory is traceable back to Sigmund Freud. Using five fixed universal stages, which were heavily biological in nature, he described the psychosexual development of children. Accredited with extending the stage concept to adult development, Carl Jung (1933) believed the second half of life (adulthood) was dominated by a drive toward illumination of the self. Viewing the age of 40 as the "noon of life" he suggested that at this age a person was at the beginning of an individualization process, or becoming more fully one's self. He contends that at this age people begin a process of self discovery and self development by increasing introspection and resolution of innate inner conflicts between polar opposites (masculine-feminine, creation-destruction, youth-age, separation-attachment).

Further development of the stage theory was done by Erik Erikson (1985) with his eight stages of Psychosocial growth. These are based on what he calls the "epigenetic principle" or the idea that the parts give rise to the whole. Erikson's eight stages

describe the development of the part of the self that interacts in and with the real world through the use of such cognitive processes as perceiving, reasoning and remembering. A summary of Erikson's Eight stages of Psychosocial Growth follows:

Psychosocial Crisis / Approximate Age

Trust versus Mistrust (birth to age 1)

The quality of parental care in meeting basic physical and psychological needs largely determines whether the child learns to view the world and people as sage and dependable.

Autonomy versus Doubt (1-3)

Parental responses to children's growing physical and mental abilities and their needs to do things for themselves produce either a sense of self-government, self-sufficiency or self-doubt.

Initiative versus Guilt (3-6)

Children given ample opportunity to initiate motor and intellectual activities learn to be self-starters, capable of planning and responsibility. Non-responsive and abusive parents foster guilt.

Industry versus Inferiority (6-11)

Children who are rewarded for their efforts when they make, build and do things develop skills as well as pride in accomplishment and become productive and achievement orientated. Lack of opportunity and support causes feelings of inferiority.

Identity versus Role Confusion (adolescence: the teens)

Adolescents must use newly developed cognitive abilities to develop a coherent sense of self that integrates past experiences with direction for future adult roles.

Intimacy versus Isolation (young adulthood- 20s and 30s)

Young adults must develop the capacity to share with and care about others, without fear of losing their own identities. The alternative is to be alone.

Generativity versus Self-absorption (Middle adulthood-40-60)

Concern about future generations and the legacy one will leave behind is ushered in by a growing awareness of mortality at midlife. Those who fail at this task remain focused on their own needs and wants.

Integrity versus Despair (late adulthood to death)

Integrity refers to the ability to look back over one's life and see it as satisfying and meaningful. It also implies an acceptance of immortality. Those who despair see their lives as unsatisfying, have great regrets, feel that time precludes any attempts at change, and fear death.

(Adapted from Erikson, 1985)

"Out of this ground plan," Erikson says, "the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole" (p.92). Each of Erikson's eight stages focuses on a psychosocial crisis in the life cycle. The term crisis in this sense refers to a challenge or turning point, at which there are two alternative ways of dealing with the environmental challenge. One adaptive and the other mal-adaptive. Success or failure depends on experiences in earlier stages as well as one's current life situation. Each stage adds to the others, eventually

creating a new entity. Thus, the individual is viewed throughout his or her life span as a developing organism, with each stage influenced by and based on specific experiences at earlier stages.

The appeal for Erikson's theory is its breadth and compatibility with other theories and disciplines related to adult growth. Robert Havighurst (1953) for example, followed Erikson's blueprint and developed an alternate stage model of life-span development for an adult based on major accomplishments required of an individual at a particular point in his or her life. Similar to Erikson, Havinghurst stresses that the process of accomplishing the tasks is related to satisfaction and success in that, and future stages.

Other theorists have also followed the stage blueprints to describe adult growth. Robert Butler (1968) for instance, outlined a process which may be used by adults to achieve integration and acceptance, or coming to terms with the experiences and realities of a life time. Calling it a "life review", it involves a return to consciousness of past experiences and conflicts. Robert Peck (1968), expanded Erikson's stages by dividing the second half of life into two chronological periods, middle age and old age, and

identified specific psychological developments within each.

During the 1970's three books were published that contributed to additional insights into adult growth and development (Vaillant, 1977; Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978) using the stage development blueprint. Of these, the account by Daniel Levinson of the life stories of 40 men, published in The Seasons of a Man's Life proved to be the most influential. In this book, Levinson provides a detailed structural view of development in adulthood, comprising of eras and periods that follow a universal, though not hierarchical, sequence. Like the seasons of a year, Levinson suggests these periods follow one another and are interrelated, but one is not of greater value than another, nor does one period represent a more advanced level of development. According to Levinson, "the essential character of the sequence is the same for all men in our study...it consists of a series of alternating stable structure-building periods and transitional structure-changing periods. These periods shape the course of adult psycho-social development" (p. 317). The sequence of the developmental periods of early and middle adulthood are as follows:

Era #1: Era of Preadulthood : 0-22 years

1. Childhood and Adolescence :

Era #2: Era of Early Adulthood : 17-45 years

2. The early adult transition: 17 - 22 years

Also called the "novice" phase, the major task here is to dismantle the life structure of childhood and prepare to enter the adult world. The four major tasks of this phase are:
a. form one's life dream
b. form mentor relationships
c. initiate an occupation
d. form love relationships (marriage and family)

3. **Entry life Structure of Early Adulthood: 22-28 years**

Here the task is to build a provisional life structure that acts as a bridge between the self and society, while at the same time exploring various possibilities for adult living.

4. **Age 30 Transition: 28-33 years**

The major task of this phase is to correct the perceived flaws that exist in the life structure that has been built in the previous phase, creating a more satisfactory structure in the upcoming phase. Here, one makes new choices and reaffirms old ones.

5. **Culminating Life Structure for Early Adulthood: 33-40 years**

This phase is divided into two parts:

a. Early Settling down: 33-36 years

Here, man continues to work at "making it" by establishing a niche in society for himself. The feeling of being valued and successful evolves according to his own timetable and standards.

b. Late Settling Down: 36-40 years

The attempt to become one's own person takes on a new and more important significance here. It is called "becoming one's own man," with the primary goal of settling down, becoming a more senior member of one's enterprise, and to gain an even greater measure of authority.

Era #3: Era of Middle Adulthood: 40 - 65 years

6. Midlife Transition: 40-45 years

The intent of this phase is to bridge the gap between early adulthood and middle adulthood. Three tasks dominate this period of time: the termination of the era of early adulthood; the initiation of middle adulthood and; to deal with the polarities of young/old, destruction/creation, masculine/feminine and attachment/separateness.

7. Entry Life Structure for Middle Adulthood: 45-50 years

Here one attempts to find a better balance between the needs of oneself and the needs of society. A man at this stage must modify and come to terms with his failure to achieve his dreams. In this process, man examines what he will leave behind as proof of his existence, or his legacy, and accepts his own mortality.

8. Age 50 Transition: 50-55 years

9. Culmination of Middle Adulthood; 55-60 years

Era #4: Era of Late Adulthood: 60 - ? years

10. Late Adult Transition: 60-65 years

11. Late Adulthood: 65+ ?

(Adapted from Levinson, 1978)

According to Levinson (1978), the Life Structure is the key concept to emerge from his research. It represents the underlying pattern or theme of a person's life at a given time. The life structure is composed of reconciliations of major choices and commitments an individual makes between the opposite extremes of growth and stagnation. Levinson states..."both generativity and its opposite pole, stagnation, are vital to a man's development. To become generative, a man must know how it feels to stagnate" (p. 30).

While Levinson dealt with life from the perspective of major developmental tasks, Roger Gould (1978) examined human growth from the perspective of assumptions that inhibited growth. Working with therapy groups as a psychologist in California, Gould noted that adults had common preoccupations at similar ages and these preoccupations revolved around "false assumptions" associated with their childhood. These false assumptions acted as growth inhibitors which patients had to overcome in order to continue to grow.

According to Gould's theory, each of us has two distinct and opposing forms of consciousness, one from childhood and the other

that is being formed as an adult. Similar to Levinson, Gould identifies a series of age-related developmental tasks for adult growth. Between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two, he alludes young adults are preoccupied with leaving their families. He maintains that choosing work and establishing the new roles and relationships in adulthood, such as being a spouse or parent, are important for adults between the ages of twenty two and twenty eight. A period of six years between the ages of twenty eight and thirty four roughly mirrors Levinson's age-thirty transition and is characterize by feelings of immobility and confusion. The period between the ages thirty five and forty five is a time of increased interest in energy for advancement in work, followed by a reflectiveness around the age of fifty, and expressions of generativity in later adulthood.

In addition to identifying issues that preoccupy adults at different ages, Gould also describes the tone or feeling surrounding each stage. A tone of optimism, determination and confidence is typical of young adulthood. The transitional time before midlife often brings depression, restlessness, and disillusionment. Later adulthood is infused with desire as the older adult strives to establish continuity with the past and the future and regain a sense

of stability and commitment.

According to Carol Ryff (1985, p. 99) the appeal for the Stage Theory is the idea that individual development is characterized by "spiraling progression of improvement" throughout a person's life span. However, there is some skepticism about this way of conceptualizing human development. Although certain critical events may be predicted, there is no way of certainty we can predict the meaning that an individual may place on the experience. It is the making of meaning from the personal experience that is a unique part of growth.

Teacher Growth

Using the stage theory blueprint, a number of researchers have written about what appears to be an identifiable series of developmental changes which occur as an individual progresses through the teaching profession. Gregore (1973) describes four phases of professional development; becoming, growing, maturing and fully functioning. Although Gregore does not indicate how long each phase lasts or how these phases affect or are affected by general development in other areas of life. He does suggest that some predictions can be made about the individual learning needs of

teachers. Gregore gives the following descriptions:

Phase 1. Becoming

In this phase, teachers are uncertain about their commitment to teaching. They are relatively dependent on the external goals and values of the system and of the professional group. They have a low tolerance for ambiguity, improvisation and experimentation. Their basic learning needs focus on filling their "bag of tricks" with methods, skills, strategies and resources for teaching. Their personal assessment is usually in relation to standardized group norms.

Phase 2. Growing

In the "growing" phase, teachers feel a sense of commitment to teaching and relative independence in the classroom. Since they have clarified many of their personal and professional goals, they focus much of their energies consolidating skills, strategies, and resources to assist them in achieving their goal.

Phase 3. Maturing

One characteristic of teachers in this phase is that they have a commitment to teaching which goes beyond the minimal expectations. They function interdependently and display a willingness to improvise, experiment and tolerate ambiguity. Learning needs focus largely on transforming their perspective about teaching and learning and on the discovery of personal meanings and values from which new perspectives can be created. Guided self assessment and self feedback based on self defined needs and objectives are common in this phase.

Phase 4. Fully functioning

When teachers are in the "fully functioning" phase, they display a definite commitment to teaching based on personal

values and goals. They are in a continual cycle of reflection of personal values, skills, and strategies.

(Adapted from Gregore, 1973)

Gregore suggest that each time an individual is placed into a new professional situation he or she is likely to return, at least temporarily, to the becoming phase and to work through each phase until a new level is achieved.

Another stage theory forwarded by Burden (1982) describes teachers' personal and professional development as occurring in three stages. Stage one, or the "survival stage", is the first year of teaching. Teachers in this stage are subject centered, lacking in self confidence, are limited in abilities, hesitant to experiment and closely adhere to earlier conceived notions of teaching. Stage two is characterized by teachers making adjustments to their teaching style and approach. Occurring between the second to fourth years of teaching, this period is called the "adjustment stage" resulting in a gain in confidence and increased abilities with regards to planning, curriculum, classroom organization, methods and knowledge of children. The last stage, which Burden calls the "mature stage", commences in the fifth year of teaching and concludes at the end of the teaching career. Teachers in this stage are much more child

centered, confident and willing to experiment with various teaching strategies and environments. Similar to Burden's three stage model, Nawalkowski (1990) also advocates personal and professional teacher development as occurring in three stages. Similar in characteristics, Nawalkowski labels his stages as the survival-orientated stage, the curriculum-oriented stage and a student-orientated stage (p. 9).

Concluding Remarks

The information presented in this chapter suggests that when teachers reflect on leadership theory and its application in the classroom, they can acquire knowledge and insight that transcends that which is normally required to teach. With the understanding that each participant may be at different stages of development, the subsequent chapters of this study will present the participants' perceptions of how they have grown personally and professionally.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The research methodology for this study was designed to attain understandings from the teachers interviewed as to how they perceived themselves growing personally and professionally from teaching junior high students about "leadership." For that purpose, a naturalistic interpretive design was adopted. This follows with Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) notion that "the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 96). When using this approach, it must be understood that the information obtained is being presented from the point of view of the participant. The reality of the subjects situations is based upon the meanings they give certain events.

Population and Sample

The participants of the study were four (4) teachers who taught or coordinated student leadership activities at junior high schools. The participants were asked to take part in the study based upon their involvement in a student leadership workshop series the

researcher facilitated. Two males and two females at various stages in their teaching careers and professional development volunteered to take part.

Profile of Participants

To assure participant anonymity, the participants will be referred to using the fictitious names: Allen, Curt, Betty and Donna. The following profile is designed to give the reader more knowledge of the participants.

Gender:	The study consisted of two females and two male teachers.
Experience:	The participants ranged in teaching experience from four years to twenty two years.
Subject Areas:	The subject areas in which the participants spent most of their time teaching were Social Studies, Physical Education, and Art. Other areas of focus included counseling and outdoor education.
Marital status:	One of the teachers was single, one was married with no children and two were married with children.
Education:	All participants of the study had Bachelor of Education degrees, two had Master Degrees in Education and one was attending University on a part time basis to attain a Master Degree in Education.

Study Design

To conduct this study a naturalistic interpretive research methodology was followed. The three data gathering systems used were: still picture analysis, interviews (conversations), and anecdotal notes. Interviews were the main method of collecting data.

During the study participants were given a camera and asked to take still photographs of events that they believed fostered their personal and professional growth. These were used as conversation starters and proved to be helpful for the participants in collecting their thoughts and reflecting in depth.

The interview section of the study consisted of three meetings that were prepared for as semi-structured interviews and which followed a research conversation process (Elliot, 1991). The interview questions were initially developed following readings of literature related to leadership, reflective practice and teacher growth. As well, questions were developed from the researcher's 18 years experience of teaching leadership. The initial interview questions from session one are included in Appendix A. In the first interview session specific questions were used to initiate the

conversation but in subsequent interviews the discussion eventually evolved into a conversation about the topics.

Each interview was tape recorded and expanded on by notes made by the researcher. The interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon place and time by the researcher and participant. Relative privacy, minimal distractions and suitable spacing between researcher and participants were considered.

When conducting the interviews, each participant was asked if he or she would grant permission to have the interview tape-recorded. A promise of confidentiality was explained and agreed to between each participant and the researcher. The participants were also informed that they had the right to identify any specific information they did not want recorded or used in the study. They were asked to sign a consent form which outlined the aforementioned aspects (See Appendix B).

Immediately following each interview, preliminary analysis of ideas, thoughts and interpretations were noted. These were filed and then referenced for compiling and analyzing all of the completed interviews. During the subsequent interviews, these notes were

shared with the participant with hopes of shedding more light on specific points.

Data Analysis

> Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you have accumulated to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others.
>
> Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 153)

This quote describes the process undertaken by the researcher in analyzing the data. Throughout the data collection process, data analysis was ongoing. Initial categories were derived during the interviews and from the audio tape of completed interviews which were transcribed verbatim. Data were coded into various categories by means of highlighting the text and recording notes in the margins. Upon completion of all the transcripts, a "thematic" analysis was conducted to extract common themes or ideas consistent amongst the participants relative to the research question. The commonalities or patterns in the reflections and insights were identified as themes based upon the following:

1. exact wording used by the participants;
2. the participants tone of voice, inflection, and emphasis on words;
3. the overall content of the conversation topic.

Some of the common themes reflected topics that were identified in the review of literature but more categories emerged as attempts were made to categorize the transcripts.

Trustworthiness of the Data

When we talk about validity in interpretive research (a face validity), it is conceptualized differently than empirical research validity. Accurate representations of situations, interviews, conversations, and teachers' comments provide the academic strength of this form of research. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggest the researcher must make certain "that any and all appropriate steps have been taken to assure that data from human sources and contexts are meaningful, trackable, verifiable, and grounded in the real life situation from which they are derived" (p. 250). To meet this criteria, the interviews for the study were tape recorded and transcribed in full to ensure the experiences shared by the respondents were accurately captured. To ensure confidentiality, the taped interviews were

transcribed by the researcher and participants were able to read only their own transcripts. This was done to ensure the accuracy of each participants statements.

Possible categories and themes were discussed with fellow educators, other than those participating in the study. Such discussions proved to be invaluable in planning, organizing the study and analyzing the data collected. During the process of data analysis, the researcher attempted to make the information credible and transferable by providing sufficient quotes to assure reader understanding of situations described by the participants.

Chapter Four

Findings of the Study

> **...better citizenship, self-confidence, creativity, empathy, responsibility, and numerous positive attributes will be nurtured in the same environment that helps leadership grow.**
>
> **Huckaby and Sperling (1981, p. 19)**

It was evident that the participants of this study were able to derive personal and professional growth which was uniquely attributed to the experience of teaching leadership to junior high students. Some were able to articulate with clarity and certainty how they had grown while others recognized that they were becoming more fulfilled as teachers, but could not explain what was causing them to change. When the participants spoke of growth, they spoke of experiences that involved their gaining more knowledge, more skill and more understanding of themselves and the world in which they lived. What follows is my understanding of the participants' perceptions of their personal and professional growth from teaching a junior high leadership program.

Growth in Confidence

When asked to describe how they had grown the most, the participants expressed a common sense of increased confidence about themselves and their leadership abilities. Approaching their roles from the perspective of being the leader of the students as opposed to the teacher in the classroom, they came to see themselves as thoughtful professionals who had the ability to assess and revise their actions in order to improve the likelihood of success for their students. They attributed much of this confidence to the importance they placed on having a positive attitude. As one participant said "I have learned that you become what you think about and I have chosen to think about being positive rather than the negative. When you think of the positive, you can do anything."

The abundance of self confidence also had a tremendous affect on the participants' personal lives as well. Betty for instance, spoke of the confidence she derived from teaching her leadership students about living their dreams and how she applied the same principle to herself and her personal goal of attending post-graduate studies in another province:

> I don't think I would have done that a year ago. Before I was too afraid because I didn't think I was good enough. But now I believe I can. I think this change has come from teaching kids about leadership and the importance

of believing in yourself.

Of all the growth outcomes indicated by the participants, the most beneficial to them personally and professionally was the increase in confidence. In fact, all of the other growth outcomes were directly and indirectly affected by this single factor. Curt expressed the importance of confidence in his growth by stating "...once I had the confidence to challenge the status quo, I really started to find out what teaching was really about!"

Growth In Being A Better Learner

Although conditions under which each participant learned varied, all felt that the process of teaching leadership enhanced their ability to learn and comprehend what was going on around them. Specifically, they felt the experience had inspired them to move from fearful and infrequent introspection to a more open and continuous reflection of themselves and the situations in which they found themselves. "I'm no longer afraid to look and when I do, I am able to see and understand and that makes me feel good," said one of the participants.

Conceptually, the learning model which the participants spoke of was cyclical in nature. It involved engaging in practice,

reflecting on practice, articulating practice, better understanding practice, and finally improving practice. Asked if they believed that teaching students about leadership was more conducive to teacher growth than other subjects, Betty responded affirmatively, stating that she thought that the experience of teaching others to be leaders perpetuated a natural curiosity to learn.

> When one commits oneself to helping others achieve their goals, then you want to learn as much as you can, about as many things as you can, so you increase the likelihood that you can make a more meaningful contribution.

Furthermore, they all believed the knowledge gained from teaching the leadership class had far more relevancy for them personally and professionally than any other class that they had taught. For instance, Allen said:

> the best part about teaching leadership is it deals with real day to day things that can make a difference in the lives of others. It's not about writing tests, or reading books. It's practical, it's about getting things done. I enjoy that because it makes learning relevant to me and I have found it has helped me with my personal interests.

Growth in Organizational Ability

Some participants talked about their teaching ability following their leadership teaching experience as compared to when they started. Most felt they were better teachers in a variety of

areas, but particularly in their ability to organize educational activities. Adopting a "learning leadership through practice" approach, the participants spoke of having to rely on 'in depth' organizing to 'pull off' many of the activities they organized for their students. Planning and coordinating numerous in-school and out-of-school activities, in short time periods, often simultaneously, was a "learning under fire" experience that pushed them to levels higher than they thought possible. "I felt like a juggler who kept getting handed another thing to keep in the air," said Curt.

> I was quite happy juggling three things...but then things were added. At first I didn't think I could handle it but I just buckled down and concentrated on what I was supposed to do and things kept going. Now I feel very confident with my ability to organize things and obviously the administration feels the same because they ask me to organize the graduation ceremonies at the end of the year.

Growth in Programming

Inspired by the lack of direction from the existing curriculum resources, the participants took it upon themselves to design and deliver their own-site specific programs. In most cases their leadership programs were designed around choosing a student or school need, identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes students

needed to address that need, and then structuring activities so the leadership students could satisfy that need within an educational context. Asked how this improved their programming skills, the participants said that the experience gave them the chance to be more opportunistic. Rather than being confined to existing resources and programming methods the participants thought teaching leadership gave them the opportunity to go beyond the norm. They felt empowered to be imaginative and creative, elements of programming which they felt were often inhibited because of the prescriptive nature of most traditional curriculums. Betty discussed some of the spin offs:

> It has made me more accountable for a variety of teaching tasks I used to take for granted. If I am going to teach it in class and assign some work related to it, that means I have to know what I am looking for and how it fits into the big picture and be able to explain it to the students. I also have to assess appropriately so I can make an evaluation....It holds me accountable because I cannot fall back on the excuse we have to do this because it is in the book. That type of programming has made the curriculum come alive for me and the students.

Growth in Leadership Understanding

The importance of incorporating theoretical and philosophical leadership training into the program was paramount for the participants. To overcome their lack of exposure to such

information most of them spent considerable time reading magazines, books and journals. By the end of the year they had become quite familiar with the literature on leadership theories. As the participants read more they started to incorporate increased amounts of leadership theory into their classroom instruction. Consequently, they felt their presentations were more dynamic and required higher levels of student thinking. As they learned more about leadership they found themselves having the ability to capitalize on opportunities to teach leadership in a less formal manner. This gave them the capability of teaching leadership in less structured environments which they believed had a greater effect on student learning. Betty talked about teachable moments:

> I feel capable of turning just about any event into a leadership learning experience. By comparing peoples' actions to the management cycle or to the functional approach model, I can focus on specific elements and analyze their contribution to the entire event. For example, I had a great conversation with some of the leadership students on the bus yesterday about increasing school spirit. We checked our plan with the three needs and found out that we were missing all of the elements that address individual needs.

Growth in Classroom Management

Another teaching skill in which the participants reported improvement was their ability to manage classroom behavior. This

growth is attributed to their success in finding the balance point between teacher control and student ownership. Rather than working from the extremes of "Do as I say" or "Do as you want", the participants found that an agreement of "let's decide together" was the most effective. The participants felt that the students viewed the leadership class as a shared endeavor and something they did together rather than something the teacher made them do. Curt, who was a first year leadership teacher reflected on the impact of this shared responsibility and on his classroom management style.

> I've learned a lot. Before I used to be a control freak and would get all uptight if they (the students) didn't respond right away. But now that I have had to share so many responsibilities with them, I realize that I have to relax a bit and let them make the decisions of how they are going to act. When I do have to step in, most of my interventions are low key and very minimal. I think it's because they feel as if I treat them as adults and they don't want to put that relationship into jeopardy....Some of them find that hard to handle, but they appreciate the fact I believe they can do it and are usually very cooperative. When someone does fall off the wagon they usually get back on track as soon as I remind them.

Growth in Teaching Strategies

Most of the participants believed that the role of the leadership teacher was to foster an environment that promoted student competency and supported student independence. In

fulfilling this role they felt very capable of promoting student competency because they believed that many of the strategies that they had learned from their teacher training fostered it. Cultivating student independence on the other hand was more of a challenge and one for which they initially felt unprepared. As they gained more experience however, they spoke of greater success and began to identify teaching strategies that allowed students more opportunities to make choices. One such strategy they all found useful was knowing what type of question to ask and when to ask it.

> The students can learn the same things but they can choose what is best for them. For example, instead of me doing all the unit planning I now brainstorm with the kids. What do we have to do this week? The key is to know what questions to ask and how to pose them so the students get involved and motivated.

Combined with other strategies such as goal setting, reflective journals and cooperative group learning, the participants felt that they had increased their instructional effectiveness and had taken their classrooms to a new dimension.

Growth in Time Management

Of the dozen or so leadership skills taught by the participants the one that they all adopted for their own regular repertoire was the skill of "time management." They described it as a process of

prioritizing and coordinating their personal and professional activities more effectively. In doing this they reported having to re-examine many of their highest held assumptions and values. For example Donna recognized the importance of quality time versus quantity time.

> I was spending so much time at school that I was neglecting all of my other responsibilities. Eventually when I was at school I thought about all the things I needed to do at home and when I was at home all I thought about was what I needed to do at school. Now that I use my day planner things are more focused. I prioritize what I have to do and set aside time to do it. In many ways this process is liberating because you can be reassured that everything you need to do, including relaxing time and unstructured time, is taken into account.

Asked why they thought they adopted this particular skill more than any other skill they simply said the number of times they had to teach, model and re-emphasise it with students made it appear as a worthwhile skill for them to have. Betty spoke of learning the importance of time management after reflecting on her students.

> The kids I see being successful in leadership are those that are able to organize their lives. They are the ones that are really busy but are able to plan their time to participate in the activities that we have planned and still do the things that they want to do outside of class. The kids that are the worst are the ones with all their irons in the fire at one time and they are trying to do everything at once. They are stressing themselves out because they are too busy. They can't really focus or give a good effort because they are too divided up. That goes

> for me as well. I have to make sure that I am not too busy because when my work load goes up, my stress level goes up, and when my stress level goes up my inter-actional skills with other people become more difficult to manage.

Growth Through A Willingness to Risk

Another focus of much discussion was the notion that participants felt that teaching others about leadership made them more conscious of the importance of taking risks now and again. Allen said, "risk is moving outside your comfort zone. Every time you do something successful out there, you grow a little." Others spoke of taking risks that they believed were unique to the leadership teacher. Examples of this were coping with the stress related to relinquishing their traditional authority to the students and adopting a "management through empowerment" style. Curt commented:

> It used to be way out of my comfort zone. I wanted to be on top of them, I wanted to have my hands on everything they were doing because I was the teacher, the leader, the one with the ultimate responsibility. But I realize that I am a more effective teacher when I facilitate learning rather than forcing it to happen. The kids seem to learn more and are more engaged in their learning when they feel they have some control of what is happening. Taking that initial risk was tough but it has steered me to a better understanding of what a teacher is suppose to do.

Others spoke of risk taking in terms of stretching themselves as a teacher. Speaking about being involved in the leadership class Allen mentioned...

> I am involved in something that really stretches me. Because I had to do something at one point that was really uncomfortable and now I see it as fun, I am more willing to risk again. There are lots of things that still make me feel uncomfortable but at least now I have the confidence to think of them as stretching opportunities rather than ball and chains.

One of the most stressful risks the participants reported facing was the uncertainty of being the leadership teacher. Feeling unqualified and professionally unprepared to teach students how to become leaders, the participants constantly felt they were always exploring uncharted territory and were always learning via the trial and error method.

> I'm not sure why I was chosen to be the leadership teacher. I guess it was because I had a good relationship with the students. Or maybe because I was involved in the extracurricular stuff. Never-the-less, I had never taken any training on how to teach leadership, or how to mark it, or anything. So every time I prepared for a class I felt I was trekking into the unknown. Once in a while that's o.k. but everyday, that can be very taxing.

Often the element of risk provided the adrenalin that the participants said "made the job exciting." All of the participants spoke of going "above and beyond" to avert the possibility of a

lesson collapsing. "I'm not an outdoor person," said Donna, "but I knew it was something the students really wanted....So I just dressed warmly and went out there with a smile and a positive attitude. When it was all over I was glad I went because it gave me an opportunity to get to know the kids outside of the school." From that perspective the element of risk was a positive growth influence.

Growth in Establishing Relationships

It was a unanimous belief amongst the participants that a critical factor in their personal and professional growth was establishing healthy relationships with their students, peers and administrators. "The better your relationship is with the person, the greater the possibility to learn something...," said Betty. As a result of assuming the responsibilities of the leadership teacher the participants felt they could talk to their principals freely about school matters. They perceived the principal as being more approachable, open and ready to listen. In one case the principal actively searched for the participant's opinion where he had never done that before. When asked to explain why they thought that their relationship with the administrators had improved, the participants reported that the nature of many of the initiatives that they had

undertaken required them to operate in much of the administrator's domain. Betty said, "just like the administrator, I am trying to get others, the students, other teachers and parents to buy into something that I believe will make a difference". As a result the participants expressed a better understanding of the administrators' role in the school and could empathize with the challenges they faced.

Non traditional responsibilities become a large part of the leadership teachers' professional lives. Organizing school dances, special events and coordinating intramurals were just a few of the additional responsibilities they assumed. Although this was a burden in some circumstances it had a number of positive effects that the participants felt had contributed to their personal and professional growth. In particular the directness and frequency with which they had to relate to other staff about sensitive and conflict laden issues broke down much of the isolation they felt in the school environment. On more than one occasion the participants spoke about initiatives that involved them with other staff with whom they would not ordinarily be involved.

> The best part of organizing the summer fest was it gave me the chance to talk to and get to know the Phys-ed guys and I guess it also gave them the chance to get to know me. I shared some ideas with them, they shared

> some ideas with me....Now we always hang around together and are constantly sharing ideas on how to make the school a better place to work at.

All the participants talked about having a special relationship with their leadership students. A relationship in which they viewed their students and themselves as equal stake holders and teammates.

> In my leadership class I really get to know the kids because they understand that we are all one team. I am the teacher but I'm also a teammate that expects them to contribute to our goals just like they expect me to. We work at a very personal level but one that is based on respect for the other. I show them respect and they in turn treat me with respect.

At the heart of these special relationships was a bond and a commitment to each other which the participants often found hard to explain. It was very evident however that these bonds were very significant to the participants.

> The bond that we have is unique. I trust him and he trusts me. As a matter of fact, after all that we have been through, organizing intramurals and dances, teaching Phys-ed and running outdoor Ed. camps I'd put him up against any staff member. Because I know when the chips are down he will come through. He always has. And that's not always easy to say about a 15 year old.

Collectively the participants said that the relationships they

derived from the leadership course fueled rather than depleted their enthusiasm to be a teacher and classroom leader. They enjoyed meetings and orchestrating interactions which involved students, staff or parents. They also reported that as a result of such initiatives they had a better understanding of the school and its' culture.

Growth in What it means to be a "Teacher"

When asked to indicate what the most unexpected outcome of teaching leadership was for them they spoke of a sense of renewed concern about learning and teaching. This renewal was rooted in feelings of increased self esteem that developed from their sense of contribution and belonging. Curt said:

> I started believing in myself and what I was doing and I am convinced that the leadership atmosphere created that. I now have excitement in my work. I am tired but I feel more relaxed because I feel good about what I am doing.

Betty commented...

> You are more relaxed because you have more confidence in yourself. I do not teach from the text book because I am told to teach it. I have the flexibility to teach to the students strengths from my strengths.

Allen spoke of a change in his perception of what it meant to

be a teacher.

> I think my view of what a teacher is has changed. I used to see myself as a disseminator of information. It was my responsibility to keep them in line and give them the information. It was up to them to them spit it back the way I wanted it. But thanks to my leadership experience, I now see there is so much more I could do in between there. I need to model what I expect. Model appropriate social behavior. Demonstrate effective problem solving steps. Be creative in my thinking and above all, be a good learner. A good teacher is not just someone who expects kids to behave and gives them tests, it is someone who takes measures to let the students extend and refine knowledge that they have acquired and gives them the opportunity to use it in meaningful situations.

Chapter Five

Evolving Themes

> **Learning is finding out what you already know, doing is demonstrating that you know it, teaching is showing others they know it as well as you. We are all learners, doers, teachers.**
>
> **Bach (1977, p. 46)**

Nothing within a school has more impact on students' learning than the personal and professional growth of its teachers. When teachers stop growing so do students. It has been said that experience is the best teacher but this is only true if teachers are willing to trust the full range of experiences they encounter as contributors to their learning and their growth. It was the crux of this study to learn from teaching leadership to youth and to identify the personal and professional growth outcomes that came from it. Consolidating the experiences that were shared by the participants resulted in the evolution of four major growth outcomes. They were: a better understanding of self; an expanded conceptual understanding of teaching; improved proficiency in teaching skills; and leadership

insights. What follows is an elaboration of each of these outcomes.

Outcome One: Better Understanding of Self

Throughout the study the participants displayed an ever increasing level of self confidence, professional ability and a maturation of a "can do" attitude. Teaching leadership had reminded them that they were in control of their destinies and by taking more proactive measures they could make their personal and professional lives more complete. They found themselves contributing to the school in capacities outside their areas of expertise. They spoke up more at staff meetings and felt more comfortable when they broke stride from the norm. With each new leadership initiative the participants felt a greater sense of confidence and a greater courage to assert some of the values that initially prompted them to become teachers. Allen stated:

> I became a teacher so I could help kids who really need it...I think leadership is a great way of doing it. Besides giving them the knowledge and skills to be good leaders I'm getting a chance to contribute to the school in a way that I have never been able to before. I feel as if I am important and for the first time, I feel as if I belong. The leadership course is really about giving people a chance to contribute and feel part of the school community.

A major promoter of this outcome was the participants'

volition to move beyond the fear of taking some sort of risk. Just as Roberts (1988) reported in his study on adult learners, coping with the stress associated with taking risks resulted in the participants seeing themselves in ways which they had not done before. They recognized that there were limits to what they could accomplish and were accepting of what they were able to do. The experience evoked a sense of self actualization or positive self acceptance. Donna commented:

> Before, I use to see myself more as a follower. I would go along with whatever the group was doing. Now I am the initiator. I'm the one who is willing to take the risk to get things going...and I always invite my students to come along and learn something new. I'm more open, more spontaneous, more aware of how I can make a difference for others. I feel and see myself as a leader.

A common source of stress for the participants occured during the practical leadership tasks when they stepped back and let the students assume leadership positions. Control was initially important to the participants simply because they believed that the educational community placed a premium on learning environments that were orderly and comfortable. Similar to Joyce and Showers (1988) perception of teachers' attitudes, the participants believed that teachers who conducted activities that involve large numbers of students with little noise and confusion were highly admired,

especially by school administrators. Giving control to students and allowing them to make decisions, relinquished the participants' control. The trepidation of "letting go of the reins" and having to deal with the potential of misguided energy always hung over the participants.

From teaching leadership the participants found themselves involved in a number of educational issues which helped uncover some of their most deeply felt emotions and entrenched values. With the assistance of dialogue, practice and professional reading, they developed an understanding of themselves. Betty commented:

> I've learned a lot about who I am and what I stand for. A fair amount of my program was away from the school and therefore I had to face a number of problems that I used to pass off to the administration. Some were small and others were very large but regardless of how significant they were, they forced me to have to take a stand....The only way to survive that type of pressure is to ask yourself the tough questions...who are you, what do you believe in, and what can you live with. I've come up with the answers to those tough questions and I feel more prepared and competent because of it.

Donna commented:

> Putting myself in a leadership position has helped me determine where I draw the line. Fighting, swearing and stuff like that I have no tolerance for. Instead of just ignoring it, I confront it now, and in a small way I'm making a difference.

Outcome Two: Expanded Conceptual Understanding

As a result of teaching leadership the participants spoke of gaining new skills and capabilities which altered the way they conceptualized teaching. The participants came to believe that it was the teacher-student relationship and not the subject matter, the strategies they used or the student ability that made a learning situation successful. For them the art and science of teaching was essentially a relationship and a process of mutual influence between the teacher and the students.

The conception of this understanding could be found in the idea of "providing one-to-one" instruction rather than spending an exorbitant amount of energy on ensuring teacher control. When the participants talked about "one-to-one" they were not referring to an essential numerical formula, rather they spoke of it in terms of ensuring that they provided the personalized attention and care that one usually associates with good interpersonal relationships. In essence the participants saw themselves as mentors for the leadership students. Curt commented:

> I see myself as the model for the students. The way I conduct my day-to-day business with them should be an example that the things I am teaching them work. It's my role to assist them to become more competent and capable.

Commitment to this conceptual understanding required the participants to re-think their positions on a number of educational issues. One in particular was the teachers responsibility in regards to motivating students. For some, this was the first time that they had ever considered it as a factor for which they were responsible. Although pressured by other colleagues to believe that this was not a teacher function, the participants felt an overwhelming obligation to try. Curt put it this way:

> It would be very hypocritical of me if I said, good leaders motivate their followers to achieve new heights, and I, the leader in the classroom say, but that doesn't apply to me because I am only a teacher. Motivating students is part of our job. Our problem is nobody ever taught us how to do that, so with help from the team (leadership students) I'm learning how.

As the participants gained confidence they also gained an appetite to articulate how they conceptualized teaching. Although each had their own distinct model, collectively they could be summed up in Allen's thoughts about teaching leadership:

> We were trained to teach using the Greek model. It's all head knowledge. We give them the stuff and they spit it out. The Hebrew model however is more oriented to teach leadership. Yes, they need the knowledge but it's more practical. The difference is this. In the Greek model one plus one equals two. The Hebrew model is pick up those two socks. They pick up one sock and then the

> other and they go, one and one is two. What that model recognizes is that the process is just as important as the product. When you experience it in a practical and relational sense then you won't forget it. That's what I believe effective teaching is all about. Keep it practical and personal.

The participants' expanded understanding was expressed in various forms but none as powerful as the acclamation of their acknowledgement that the position of teacher and classroom leader must not be confused with a position of authoritative power. Conceding that teachers have often been placed above the students, at least in terms of the traditional educational hierarchy, the participants felt that this placement only ensured them of subordinates and not necessarily willing followers or learners. To truly make a difference in a classroom the participants realized that they had to model the attributes of a good leader and good follower at all times. Only by modeling such behavior could they earn the respect of the students, which they believed to be the foundation of a healthy relationship and learning environment.

Teaching leadership moved the participants from a situation of non-reflectivity to one of becoming an active inquirer into their own and others' practices. In doing so they acquired new lenses to critically examine their circumstances and the education

environment.

Outcome Three: Improved Proficiency in Skills

As a result of teaching leadership to youth the participants reported that they had improved their proficiency in a number of teaching skills. Specifically they identified their ability to plan, organize, direct, control, and coordinate activities and lessons. They also reported having more confidence in their abilities to communicate and speak effectively as well as more proficiency at using student initiated teaching strategies.

The participants' improved proficiency in teaching skills emerged from two key elements of the leadership experience. The first was from their lesson planning and preparation. Primarily intended to produce a blueprint for an exciting and informative lesson which students could understand. The by-product of this preparation was the identification of good teaching components by equating them to good leadership actions. By doing task analysis on various leadership skills and breaking them into mechanical processes that could be taught, the participants were able to identify and replicated critical components of good teaching. Donna explained her increased proficiency as follows:

> Not only did I get a chance to breakdown the (leadership) skill but I got a chance to explain it and then practice it in a practical teaching situation. Then I got to watch others try it and give them feed back. After all that you learn lots about what good leading is and how it applies to being a teacher.

A common concern of many of the participants was the lack of theoretical or conceptual base for their programs. Actually when one looks at the data there is a wealth of conceptual knowledge about leadership coming from a variety of disciplines and fields of study. The actual problem in fact was synthesizing and using what was known from a variety of sources in a concise yet cogent manner. By thinking about what subject material was critical and how the new content could be connected with previously acquired knowledge, the participants felt their sophistication and technical expertise in programming increased far beyond what was required in other subject areas. Donna shared her experience this way:

> Starting a program from scratch is hard but it is also a great learning experience. There is a lot of work involved in coming up with aims, goals and objectives. But when I am teaching now I have a lot better idea of how all the information fits together. I can link ideas together, use more complex teaching strategies and generally relate the curriculum to the students in such a way that they can see the big picture.

The second key element of the leadership experience was the

actual functioning of the classroom. To truly learn a skill, an individual needs to spend considerable time with it, learning the basic idea, experimenting, receiving feedback and continuing with the refinement. The leadership classroom provided the ideal setting to apply the skills on a regular basis. For example, after talking about the importance of goal setting the participants took it upon themselves to model the use of goals in their day to day activities. Initially the participants confessed of having thought little about goals. Apparently they did not consider the establishment of goals as a central part of teaching, although selecting activities and organizing materials was. To the participants, instructional goals for the most part were unspoken, or "in the head." They believed them to be implicit in the activities and content that they selected. Eventually as the participants became more knowledgeable about leadership they identified a greater number of instructional goals which in the words of Donna, "gave the program more meaning."

Just as Stenhouse (1975) suggested, the classroom provided a natural setting where the participants could study various educational processes. Betty enhanced her ability to influence her students' desire to learn by asking them to think of how good teachers motivated them to learn and to describe what it "looked

like" and "sounded like." Recording their answers on large chart paper, the list they produced became her personal repertoire of motivational strategies that she used in appropriate situations.

As the participants developed a wider range of skillful behavior it became very evident that over time they had adopted a very distinct "transformational" style of leadership. This style did not suddenly emerge complete with labels and solutions. Rather it emerged as the participants worked their way through the leadership program and leadership activities. Through trial and error the participants adopted a more cooperative teaching style that added another dimension to their teaching.

Outcome Four: Leadership Insights

Broadening experiences are a key part of personal and professional growth because they help develop and enhance a person's understanding. The more experiences a person has in a variety of roles the more the person is able to see the inter-relationships that exist in those areas. Being the leadership teacher the participants found themselves submerged in a variety of leadership roles which were, in most cases, new to them. Just as Karnes and Meriweather (1989) reported, the participants had little

if any training on how to teach leadership. In the process of learning "under fire" the participants gained a number of insights about leadership. The first was the importance of modeling or "leading by example." Over the course of the study the participants increasingly recognized a connection between their actions and the impact it had on the development of the students they taught. Betty spoke of this impact:

> If I am having a difficult time with a student and I model patience and negotiation skills. The kids see that I am doing that and they feel responsible for doing the same things. It's like if you are around someone who is committed to her belief and shows it through action you tend to take a second look at what they are doing and saying.

Allen talked about the influence that appropriate teacher modeling has on student motivation.

> I opened up my day timer with my goals which I had obviously set up and it was amazing. It was an incredible class! It went very quiet and then they got into the activity. I believe that at that moment they realized that I had thought it through, believed it was important and was committed enough to practice it. I believe my model was the major influence in the success of that class.

The participants found the credibility and respect they earned from the students and their peers was generated primarily by the hidden curriculum that they conveyed. This reinforced for them the

importance of doing the little things and that actions are always more powerful than words.

A second leadership insight gained by the participants was that the "process yields the product." Besides relying on their curriculum knowledge, their experiences and their teaching competence, the participants found that the process they followed had a tremendous effect on the outcome of the event. For example Curt said:

> I found when I took the time to explain my expectations, the thinking behind my decisions, and my concerns....Things always went much better.

The core of this insight was the participants' discovery that they (the teachers) only "appeared" once the students let them. Therefore, in order to facilitate this student choice the participants placed as much emphasis on preparing students for learning as they did presenting the material to be learned. "How you prepare students for new ideas has a lot to do with whether or not kids will accept it," said Allen. "I've learned that careful consideration to their attitudes, interests and past experiences help determine the teaching process that I can use."

The third leadership insight made by the participants was that a successful leadership intervention was essentially a win/win situation. As opposed to a win/lose situation in which there is competition for "being right" at the expense of other people, the focus of good leadership according to the participants was a shift from defeating the other person to defeating the problem. Curt suggested:

> Being an effective leader means helping other people achieve their goals....By helping them see how they can benefit from their efforts, the students are more cooperative and willing to put in that extra effort.

By the nature of their roles the participants had to initiate and deal with change. The key ingredient to initiate successful change was the fourth insight and was labeled as "students need to feel empowered to change." Initially many of the participants viewed the accumulation of student power as something that was potentially threatening and to be avoided at all costs. However, as the participants gained more experience they eventually realized that empowering people was a fundamental leadership challenge. Acknowledging that students who perceive themselves to be powerless become frustrated and apathetic, the participants took considerable measures to build on the familiar statement, "If you

believe you've got it, then you've got it. If you believe you don't have it, you're probably right." Besides incorporating a variety of teaching strategies that promoted student decision making, they also spent considerable time creating environments in which they promoted mistakes as learning opportunities. Curt talked about the importance of such an environment:

> Students will only believe in themselves if they can stretch and be successful. So many times we (teachers) stifle them by reducing the challenge and tell them what they can't do rather than what they can do. Before kids will believe in themselves and show initiative, we have to show them that it is alright to try and make mistakes. Good educators should be able to turn any situation into a positive learning situation.

Chapter Six

Study Summary

It is generally agreed upon that staff development is least effective when planned, predetermined, and deliberate. When administrators set out to assist teachers, either through workshops or inservice training, only modest professional change results. On the other hand, professional development is most likely to occur as a consequence of teachers and administrators imaginatively pursuing regular school issues and functions together. Although simple, increased emphasis on continuous reflection can be an effective way to promote personal and professional growth. It was the intent of this study to determine the growth outcomes that resulted from teachers reflecting thoughtfully about the work they do. The specific research question investigated was "what kinds of personal and professional outcomes might teachers experience from teaching leadership to junior high students?"

In summary the participants experienced four growth outcomes: a better understanding of self; an expanded conceptual understanding of teaching; improved proficiency in teaching skills;

and leadership insights. These outcomes were identified using a thematic analysis as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) naturalistic interpretive design and were supported by pertinent information relative to teacher growth. An individual break down of each outcome follows:

A Better Understanding of Self

Participants believed that as a result of teaching leadership to junior high students they had developed a better understanding of who they were, what they stood for, and what they believed in. They felt the self knowledge they gained was a source of energy and renewal. They felt valued as empowered decision makers to rise above the detail and trivia to see the process of teaching as interesting and engulfing. A major contributor to this growth was the learning derived through reflection on how to deal with stress.

An Expanded Conceptual Understanding of Teaching

As a result of teaching leadership the participants were able to see education and their role as teachers from a more wholistic perspective. They came to believe that the art and science of teaching was essentially a relationship and a process of mutual influence between the teacher and the students. The key ingredient

of this new understanding was to help students be successful and independent by creating "one-to-one" learning situations.

Improved Proficiency in Teaching Skills

As a result of teaching leadership to youth the participants reported having improved their proficiency in teaching skills. Specifically they identified their ability to plan, organize, direct, control, and coordinate activities and lessons. They also reported having more confidence in their abilities to communicate effectively and use various student focused teaching strategies. The participants' improved proficiency in teaching skills emerged from two sources. First, from their efforts in planning and preparing leadership lessons, they gained insights to common teaching and leading skills. Second, they improved their proficiency by practicing the various skills while they were leading in the classroom.

Leadership Insights.

As a result of teaching leadership to youth the participants learned a number of insights about leading others. These insights included the importance of leading by example, process yields the product, "perceived power" is a fundamental building block for initiating change and effective leadership interventions are built

from win/win situations.

Suggestions for Further Study

While this study identifies four growth outcomes that result from teaching leadership, several questions have arisen that could lead to further research. They are:

a. Would the growth outcomes be enhanced if the participants were supported with a more formal professional development program?

b. Do other subject areas provide the same or better opportunity for personal and professional development? If so what are they?

c. What elements of the teaching experience are the most beneficial for personal and/or professional growth?

d. What merit would there be in incorporating a leadership teaching experience in educating potential school administrators.

Chapter Seven

Reflections

> **We learn by absorbing and reflecting. Standing back and yet embracing, we ask ourselves, "What does this story tell me? In what way does this person's experience expand, challenge, reflect my own thinking? What will I change to absorb this story, and make it part of my experience?" You too must construct a meaning from the narrative. You become the centre of the text - you displace the speaker.**
>
> **Haughey (1990, p. 41)**

Entering into this research I was well aware of the potential impact the experience of teaching leadership can have on the personal and professional growth of teachers. Indeed, I attribute much of my personal and professional growth to such an experience. This is not to say that I was totally closed by my preconceived ideas to what I might find but rather that I had full intention of seeking from others, to some degree, what I already knew existed. For me this study not only addressed the issue of teacher growth but also confirmed my own personal and professional development.

Haughey (1990) suggests the goal of interpretive research is not prediction and control but rather understanding. In learning about the life experiences of others, she suggests that we can discover a multitude of meanings and ourselves in the process. I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to critically reflect on classroom practice with such talented teachers. As a result of our conversations, I have a better understanding of teaching and a greater appreciation of how much leadership must be displayed to fulfill that role.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Critical Incident

1. When you think back over the past year teaching leadership, what event or experience has been particularly significant or intense for you? Describe the event.

    a. Would you consider this a positive or negative event? Why?
    b. Was the event expected or unexpected?
    c. Was this event initiated by yourself or by someone or something external to you?

2. What makes this event significant for you?

Learning from the critical incident

1. What did you learn from the experience?

    a. What did you learn about yourself? Others? World in general?
    b. What did you learn about the profession of teaching?

Personal growth

1. Did any significant outcomes/changes occur, if so what were they?

    a. Did the learning result in changes in your attitudes? decisions? behaviors?
    b. Do you see yourself differently as a result of the critical incident?

2. How did the critical incident or resulting learning affect your work?

Lasting Impact

1. Would you consider the learning or changes that resulted to have a long or short term effect on your professional development?

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in this study. The intent of this form is to outline the purpose of the study, the parameters that will guide the research, and your rights as participants.

The focus of this study is to investigate the professional growth that results from reflecting on critical incidents that occur while teaching leadership to Junior High students. Four individuals will be involved in the study.

You will be asked to participate in three personal interviews lasting approximately 1 hour each. The interviews will be audio taped and a written transcript will be provided to you after each interview. I will then identify themes and trends that emerge from all the transcripts and present the findings. These will be shared with you for verification and accuracy.

Please feel free to write down any insights, perceptions, feelings or thoughts that may come to mind in between the three interviews. These can either be shared verbally with me at the next interview or forwarded to me in writing.

All the information collected will be confidential and any reference to your name or where you work will be changed to protect your anonymity. Phrases and/or sentences from the interview transcripts will be included in the final written thesis document, however, no reference will be made about you personally.

The following have been outlined as your rights as participants in the study.

1. You may decline to answer any question during an interview that you do not feel comfortable addressing.

2. You may stop the interview at any time you feel you no longer want to be involved.

3. You may stop the interview at any time you feel you no longer want to be involved.

4. You will be assured anonymity regarding all the information you provide.

5. You will be provided with transcripts of all the interviews you participate in and will also received a copy of the analysis of all the data collected for the study.

Thank you again for taking the time to engage in this study. Hopefully this experience will be a valuable learning experience for you as it will be for me. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Jamie Pallett

Participant Name _____

Address _____

_____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____